

QUEEN'S GAMBIT

ELIZABETH FREMANTLE



READING GUIDE

Reading Group Questions:

1. The female characters in Queen's Gambit have very little choice concerning the direction of their lives; do you think these themes are still culturally relevant today?
2. In the first chapter Katherine obliges Latymer's wish to be euthanized; an action that is still condemned by law today. Do you think Katherine was right to kill him, at his request? Should euthanasia be legalised? What would be the repercussions if it were?
3. Katherine is introduced in the book as a clever and selfless character – ready to go against her religious beliefs to ease her husband's suffering. To what extent did your opinion of Katherine change throughout the book? By the end did you respect her more, or less?
4. Queen's Gambit is primarily a story about the sixth wife of Henry VIII, but told from the point of view of two different characters. What do you think Dot's perspective added to the story?
5. Throughout the story we see King Henry's moods change frequently, often to Katherine's disadvantage. Do you think, when it comes down to it, that Henry loved Katherine?
6. Huicke tells Katherine that she ought not feel guilty about plotting to poison the King, as the scheme was never seen through. Do you think this excuses her?
7. Huicke and Udall are one of the couples mentioned frequently in Queen's Gambit, and we are told that Udall often seeks sexual gratification with people other than Huicke. Do you think this is a healthy relationship? Does Huicke value the relationship more than Udall does?
8. Katherine asks Dot to deliver a parcel containing gunpowder to the Tower, despite knowing that it is a crime. What does this careless request tell us about Katherine's character?
9. Was Katherine right to put herself and those around her in danger by breaking the censorship laws of the time? Did her pride get in the way of her rationality?
10. We learn from Dot that Elizabeth deeply regrets hurting Katherine by having an indiscretion with Thomas Seymour, but later on we are told that they had planned to marry. Do you think Elizabeth was ever truly sorry? If so, then why do you think she continued to see him?